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GEN. WASHINGTON

ON THE

GOVERNMENT

OF THE

United States of America

AND ON

REVOLUTION, Etc.

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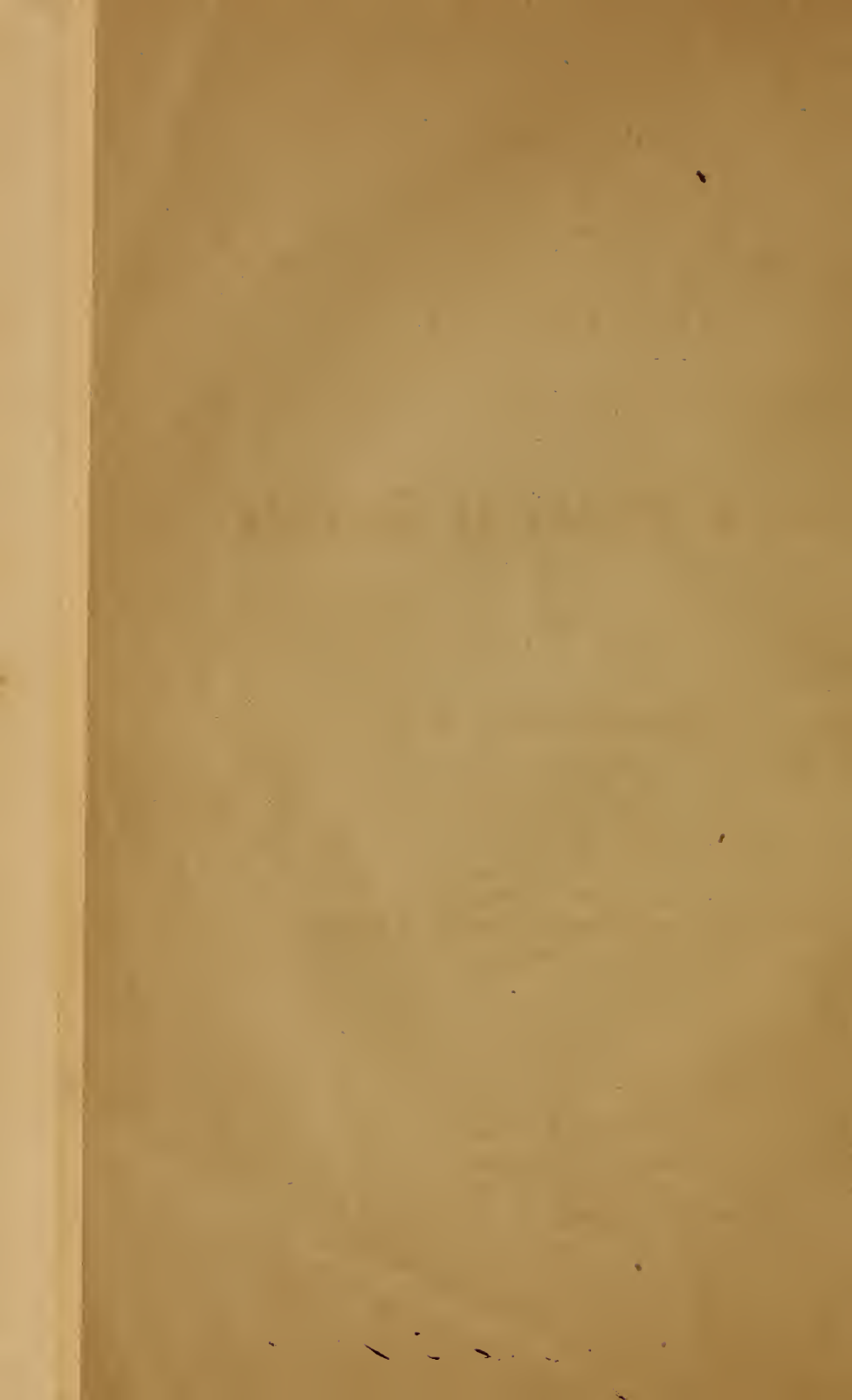
Compiled from the Addresses and Writings of Washington.

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JOHN A. GRAY, PRINTER, STEREOTYPER, AND BINDER,  
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ENTERED, according to Act of Congress, in the year 1861, by  
E. ORAM,  
In the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States for the  
Southern District of New-York.

A MEMBER of this community, who can not see the surging elements of rebellious treason, rising seemingly to destroy us as a people, and extinguish our nationality among the Powers of the World, without feeling the deepest interest in the present and coming events by which we are and may be surrounded, offers the accompanying extracts from the writings of the illustrious Washington, for the consideration of the people.

Among the many addresses made, at the North, South, East, and West, on this momentous crisis, the writer has not seen one that contained any direct reference to the counsels of the Father of his Country, of him who was, under providence, the Guide, the Leader, and the Founder of this hitherto "Great Republic."

Who so capable as he, of expounding the elements of the government, and defining the duties of the members of it, as men and as citizens?

The present state of our country shows how little the nature of our government has been understood by the people at large, and in how small a degree the only principles by which it was established, and by which it can be sustained, have been acquired.

Information from a reliable source, presents the only antidote for the present state of things. For this purpose, the compiler of these extracts, as above all others,

has collected the views and counsels of the great Washington on the momentous subjects which threaten "to divide us as a people, and scatter us as a nation."

It is believed that his wisdom is as potent as ever, and if submitted to, will be sufficient to enlighten all who are friends to the best interests of the country.

In the history of the people who, under their great Leader, achieved the independence of this country, we find that all their operations were collective. Upon all occasions of public consideration they united for general defense. As early as 1754, the Colonies united during the French and Indian war. A plan, similar to our Federal Constitution, was then drawn up by Doctor Franklin, submitted to the people, and adopted, July 4th, 1754.

On the excitement of the Stamp Act, produced by Great Britain in 1765, a Congress of Delegates from the different Colonies assembled in New-York, October 7. They continued in session fourteen days, and then set forth their grievances and their rights as a people, and, as such, appealed to the King and Parliament of England for redress and acknowledgment. An eminent historian says: "The proceedings of this second colonial Congress were approved by all the Provincial assemblies, and the people of America were then as firmly united as they were ten years afterwards, when the Declaration of Independence was made. From that time they acted as one people, having one interest, one purpose, one hope." As one people, they fought and suffered, and achieved their independence, and became what we

have been. But it was after eight years of sufferings, of privations of every kind, such as they who have enjoyed the fruits of it know nothing of—with the sacrifice of 70,000 men, and an expenditure of over \$130,000,000. This union and suffering was the price they paid for *our* independence. But hear the great Washington, whose teachings are happily recorded for our benefit and for that of the world.

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## E X T R A C T S .

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Extract from an Address by his Excellency, Gen. George Washington,  
to the Army. Head-Quarters, April 18th, 1783.

“The Commander-in-Chief offers his most cordial congratulations on this occasion to all the troops of the United States in general, and in particular to those gallant and persevering men who resolved to defend the rights of their invaded country, so long as the war should continue; for these are the men who ought to be considered as the pride and boast of the American Army; being crowned with well-earned laurels, they may soon withdraw from the fields of glory to the more tranquil walks of civil life! While the Commander-in-Chief recollects the almost infinite variety of scenes through which we have passed, with a mixture of astonishment, pleasure, and gratitude; while he contemplates the prospect before us with rapture, he can not

help wishing, that all the brave men who have shared the toils and dangers of effecting this glorious Revolution, of rescuing millions from the hand of oppression, and of laying the foundation of a mighty empire, might be impressed with a proper idea of the dignified part they have been called to act, under the smiles of Providence, on the stage of human affairs; for happy, thrice happy, shall they be pronounced hereafter, who have contributed any thing, who have performed the meanest office, in erecting this stupendous Fabric of Freedom and Empire on the broad basis of Independency; who have assisted in protecting the right of human nature, and in establishing an asylum for the poor and oppressed of all nations and religions. The glorious task for which we first flew to arms, being fully acknowledged and firmly secured, by the smiles of Heaven on the purity of our cause, and the honest exertions of a feeble people, determined to be free, against a powerful nation, and the character of those who have persevered through every extremity of hardship, suffering, and danger, being immortalized by the appellation of the Patriot Army, nothing now remains, but for the actors of this mighty scene to preserve an unvarying consistency to the last, to close the drama with applause, and, to retire from the military theatre with the same approbation of angels and men which has crowned all their former virtuous actions."

Extracts from a Circular sent by his Excellency George Washington, Commander-in-Chief of the Armies of the United States of America, to the Governors of the several States.

“The great object for which I had the honor to hold an appointment in the service of my country being accomplished, I am now preparing to resign it into the hands of Congress, and return to that domestic retirement which it is well known I left with the greatest reluctance.” “Before I carry this resolution into effect, I think it a duty to make this my last official communication, to offer my sentiments respecting some important subjects which appear to me to be intimately connected with the tranquillity of the United States.”

“The citizens of America, placed in a most enviable position as the sole lords and proprietors of a vast tract of continent, embracing all the soils and climates of the world, are to be considered as the actors on a most conspicuous theatre, which seems to be peculiarly designed by Providence for the display of human greatness and felicity. Here they are surrounded with every thing that can contribute to human enjoyment; but Heaven has crowned all its other blessings, by giving a fairer opportunity for political happiness than any other nation has been favored with.”

“The foundation of our empire was not laid in a gloomy age of ignorance and superstition, but at an epoch when the rights of mankind were better understood and more clearly defined than at any former

period. The researches of the human mind after social happiness had been carried to a great extent. The treasures of knowledge, acquired by the labors of philosophers, sages, and legislators through a long succession of years, have been laid open for our use, and their collected wisdom may be happily applied, in the establishment of our forms of government. The free cultivation of letters, the extension of commerce, the progressive refinement of manners, the growing liberality of sentiment, and above all, the pure and benign light of Revelation, have had an ameliorating influence on mankind, and increased the blessings of society. At this auspicious period, the United States came into existence as a nation; and if her citizens should not be completely happy, the fault will be entirely their own.

“Such is our situation, and such are our prospects; but notwithstanding the cup of blessing is reached out to us, notwithstanding happiness is ours, if we have a disposition to seize the occasion and make it our own, yet it appears to me (far-seeing man) there is an option, still left to the United States of America, whether they will be respectable and prosperous, or contemptible and miserable as a nation. This is the time for their political probation. This is the moment when the eyes of the world are turned upon them. This is the time to establish or ruin their national character forever. This is the favorable moment to give such a tone to the Federal Government as will enable it to answer the ends of

its institution, or it may be the ill-fated moment for relaxing the power of the Union, annihilating the cement of the Confederation, and exposing us to become the sport of European politics, which may play one State against another, to prevent their growing importance, and to serve their own interested purposes; for, according to the system of policy the States shall now adopt, they shall stand or fall; and by their confirmation or lapse, it is yet to be decided, whether the Revolution shall be a blessing or a curse—a blessing or a curse, not to the present age alone, for with our own fate will the destiny of unborn millions be involved. With this conviction of the importance of the present crisis, silence in me would be a crime.”

“There are four things which I humbly conceive are essential to the well-being, I may even venture to say to the existence, of the United States, as an independent power.

“1st. An indissoluble union of the States, under one Federal Head.

“2d. A sacred regard to public justice.

“3d. The adoption of a proper peace establishment.

“4th. The prevalence of that pacific and friendly disposition among the people of the United States, which will induce them to forget their local prejudices and politics, to make those mutual concessions which are requisite to the general prosperity, and, in

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some instances, to sacrifice their individual advantages to the interest of the community.

“These are the pillars upon which the glorious fabric of our independence and national character must be supported.

“Liberty is the basis; and whoever would dare to sap the foundation or overturn the structure, under whatsoever specious pretext he might attempt it, will merit the bitterest execrations and the severest punishment which can be inflicted by his injured country.”

“Whatever measures have a tendency to dissolve the Union, or contribute to violate the sovereign authority, ought to be considered as hostile to the liberty and independence of America, and the authors of them treated accordingly.”

“Without an entire conformity to the spirit of the Union we can not exist as an independent power.”

“It is only in our united character that we are known as an empire, that our independence is acknowledged, that our power can be regarded or our credit supported among foreign nations. The Treaties of other powers with the United States of America will have no validity upon a dissolution of the Union. We shall be left nearly in a state of nature, or we may find, by our own unhappy experience, that there is a natural and necessary progression from the extreme of anarchy to the extreme of tyranny, and that arbitrary power is most easily established on the ruins of liberty.”

Extracts from the Valedictory Address of his Excellency George Washington, announcing his intention of retiring from all Public Employment, dated September 17th, 1796.

“The unity of government, which constitutes you one people, is a main pillar in the edifice of your real independence, the support of your tranquillity at home, your peace abroad ; of your safety and your prosperity, of that very liberty which you so highly prize.) But as it is easy to foresee, that from different causes, and from different quarters, much pains will be taken, many artifices employed to weaken in your minds the conviction of this truth ; as this is the point in your political fortress, against which the batteries of internal and external enemies will be most constantly and actively (though often covertly and insidiously) directed, it is of infinite moment, then, that you should properly estimate the immense value of your national union, to your collective and individual happiness ; that you should cherish a cordial, habitual, and immovable attachment to it, accustoming yourselves to think and speak of it as the palladium of your political safety and prosperity ; watching for its preservation with jealous anxiety, discountenancing whatever *may suggest even a suspicion that it can be in any event abandoned, and indignantly frowning upon the first attempt to alienate the sacred ties which now link together the various parts.*

“For this you have every inducement of sympathy and interest. Citizens by birth or choice of a common country, that country has a right to concentrate your common affection.

“The name of American, which belongs to you in your natural capacity, must always exalt the just pride of patriotism, more than any appellation derived from local discrimination. With slight shades of difference, you have the same religion, manners, habits, and political principles. You have in a common cause, fought and triumphed together; for the independence and liberty you possess are the work of joint counsels and joint efforts, of common dangers, sufferings, and successes. With such powerful and obvious motives to union, affecting all parts of our country, there will always be reason to suspect the patriotism of those, who in any quarter, may endeavor to weaken its bands.”

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**Washington on the Power of the People to amend the Constitution or to change their Form of Government.**

*“The basis of our political systems, is the right of the people to make and to alter their constitutions of government, but the constitution which at any time exists, until changed by an explicit and authentic act of the whole people, is sacredly obligatory upon all.”*

“The very idea of the power and right of the people to establish government, presupposes the duty of every individual to obey the established government.”

“I have already intimated to you, the danger of parties in the state, founding them in reference to geographical discriminations. Let me now warn you, in the most solemn manner, against the baneful effects of

the spirit of party generally. This spirit, unfortunately, is inseparable from our nature, having its root in the strongest passions of the human mind. It exists under different shapes in all governments, more or less, but it is seen in its greatest rankness in popular governments, and is truly their worst enemy.

“The alternate domination of one faction over another, sharpened by the spirit of revenge, has perpetrated the most horrid enormities, and is, in itself, a frightful despotism.” “If in the opinion of the people, the distribution or modification of the constitutional powers be in any particular wrong, let it be corrected by an amendment, in a way which the constitution designates. But let there be no *change by Usurpation*, for though this, in one instance, may be good, it is the customary instrument by which free governments are destroyed. The precedent must always greatly overbalance in permanent evil, any partial or transient benefit which the use can at any time yield.”

✂ “Virtue or morality is a necessary spring of popular governments. Who that is a true friend to it, can look with indifference upon the attempt to shake the fabric?” †

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President Washington on Education.

“Promote as an object of primary importance, institutions for the diffusion of knowledge. In proportion as the structure of a government gives force to public opinion, it should be enlightened.” In his last speech

to Congress the President points as his motives to the institution of a National University, "The assimilation of the principles, opinions, and manners of our countrymen by the common education of a portion of our youth, from every quarter," and remarks: "The more homogeneous our citizens can be made in these particulars, the greater will be the prospect of our permanent union: and that a primary object should be the education of our youth in the SCIENCE OF GOVERNMENT." (When have our youth been so instructed?)

Such are some of the teachings of the great and good Washington: they were embodied in his life, and should be sent broadcast, throughout the country. That they may be so, is the paramount desire of the compiler.

When a truly good man departs from us, all is not interred with his body. It is now many years since Washington was gathered to "the general assembly of the just made perfect," yet his example is with us for imitation, and the counsels of his experience for our instruction. By these he is still here, and is yet the best qualified to be our instructor, our leader, and the commander-in-chief of the armies of our distracted country. In these times, that try men's souls, and cause our political fabric "to reel to and fro," we look in vain for any other. Let us, then, gather ourselves under his banner, obey his orders, and he will again lead us to victory and peace.

PRO PATRIA.

*New-York, February 1st, 1861.*















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